

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, TSPA, NZ, US

SUBJECT: TRANSIT CIRCLE FACILITY NEW ZEALAND, NAVAL
OBSERVATORY, WASH DC

1. NAVY IS INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A FACILITY IN NEW ZEALAND FOR A TEN-YEAR PROGRAM OF ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS. PURPOSE OF PROGRAM IS TO DETERMINE POSITIONS AND PROPER MOTIONS OF SOUTHERN HEMISPHERIC STARS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ACCURACY OF CELESTIAL POSITIONING AND NAVIGATION IN SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. THIS PROGRAM IS PART OF NAVAL OBSERVATORY MISSION. ENTIRE PROGRAM IS UNCLASSIFIED: RESULTS WILL BE INTERNATIONALLY AVAILABLE.

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2. THE PROPOSED FACILITY WILL INCLUDE A TRANSIT CIRCLE TELESCOPE AND A TWIN ASTROGRAPH TELESCOPE. FIVE SMALL BUILDINGS WILL BE SITED ON FIVE ACRES WITH NO FENCE. THE PROPOSED SITE IS KNOWN AS THE BLACK BIRCH EXPERIMENTAL AREA, IS CROWN LAND OWNED BY THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT (SOILS CONSERVATION AND RIVERS CONTROL COUNCIL, MINISTRY OF WORKS AND DEVELOPMENT) AND COULD BE UTILIZED UNDER

LEASE OR OTHER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TERMS. THE SITE WAS SUGGESTED BY DR. B.M. LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF THE CARTER OBSERVATORY, WELLINGTON, AFTER PROFESSIONAL CONTACT WITH NAVAL OBSERVATORY ASTRONOMERS. FROM SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT,

SITE APPEARS TO BE BEST AVAILABLE BECAUSE OF LATITUDE AND CLIMATE. THE FACILITY WOULD BE CONSTRUCTED BY COMPETITIVE BIDDING BASED ON US GOVT PREPARED PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS WITH NZ CONTRACTORS BEING ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.

3. FACILITY WILL BE OPERATED BY NINE CIVILIAN ASTRONOMERS FROM THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY. WHILE THERE IS NO SECURITY PROBLEM WITH NZ PARTICIPATION IN OBSERVING PROGRAM, ACTUAL EXTENT OF SUCH PARTICIPATION WOULD BE DETERMINED BASED UPON INTEREST, AVAILABILITY, AND TRAINING OF NZ PERSONNEL AND AVAILABILITY OF US FUNDING.

4. CIVILIAN CEILING POINTS AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING FOR PROGRAM ARE ADDRESSED IN FISCAL YEAR 1979 AND 1980 PROGRAMMING SUBMISSIONS. PROJECT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION FUNDING (PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE 550,000 DOLLARS) IS INCLUDED IN DOD MILITARY CONSTRUCTION (MILCON) PROGRAM FOR FY 1980. FACILITY WOULD BE CONSTRUCTED DURING SOUTHER HEMISPHERE SUMMER OF NOV 1979 THROUGH MAY 1980. CONGRESS HAS EXPRESSED A DESIRE THAT DESIGN OF MILCON PROJECTS BE ACCOMPLISHED EARLY ENOUGH TO INSURE VALID COST ESTIMATE UNCLASSIFIED

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WHEN ANNUAL MILCON PROGRAM GOES BEFORE COGNIZANT SUBCOMMITTEES.

5. THEREFORE, NAVY DESIRES TO SEND ONE CIVILIAN ARCHITECT AND ONE CIVILIAN CIVIL ENGINEER TO NZ FOR ONE OR TWO WEEKS TO CONDUCT SITE INVESTIGATION, INCLUDING SOIL BORINGS AND TOPOGRAPHIC STUDIES TO DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK BIRCH SITE AND TO ACQUIRE ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION COST DATA TO BE USED FOR FACILITY DESIGN AND PROJECT COST ESTIMATE REQUIRED FOR SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS AS PART OF FY 1980 MILCON PROGRAM. NAVY CONTEMPLATES ENGAGING SERVICES OF LOCAL NZ SURVEYOR TO ASSIST IN TOPOGRAPHIC STUDY.

6. REQUEST EMBASSY APPROACH APPROPRIATE NZ GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND REQUEST PERMISSION FOR SITE INVESTIGATION TO BE CONDUCTED. IF NZ GOVT IS AGREEABLE, NAVY IS READY TO SEND ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER, WHO WOULD COORDINATE THEIR ACTION WITH EMBASSY AND DR. LEWIS. EMBASSY SHOULD STRESS THAT SITE INVESTIGATION WILL NOT DAMAGE OR DEFACE SITE BUT WILL PROVIDE ENGINEERING INFORMATION WHICH IS VITAL TO PRELIMINARY DESIGN EFFORTS,

COST ESTIMATING, AND DEVELOPMENT OF MILCON PROGRAMMING
DOCUMENTATION. IN VIEW OF LIMITED TIME REMAINING BEFORE
FY 1980 MILCON PROGRAM SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS, YOUR
EARLIEST RESPONSE IS SOLICITED.
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